

**BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2013**

**The bi-monthly meeting of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee was held on Monday, February 25, 2013, in the cafeteria of Mt. Hope High School, 199 Chestnut Street, Bristol, RI. Mr. Silva called the meeting to order at approximately 7:02 PM.**

**Present: Paul Silva, Chairman; Karen A. Lynch, Secretary; Susan Rancourt, Treasurer; Diana Campbell,) Marjorie McBride, William O'Dell (7:42 pm), John Saviano, Lynn Wainwright, Melinda L. Thies, Superintendent; Mario J. Andrade, Assistant Superintendent; Pauline A. Silva, Director of Administration and Finance; Mary N. Almeida, Director of Literacy and Title I; Leslie J. Anderson, Director of Pupil Personnel Services; and Andrew Henneous, Esq., District Solicitor**

**Guests: Linda Rimoshytus**

**Absent: John Bento**

**OPENING BUSINESS**

**All present were invited to join in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.**

**ACCOLADES**

**Congratulations to the Mt. Hope Robotics Teams, the Tater Bots and Looney Tuned Robotics, who worked collaboratively and competed at the North Andover, MA FTC Qualifier coming in fourth place. The Tater Bots were able to become a Finalist Alliance at the NY FTC Hudson Valley Championship where they took second place bringing home another trophy for the display case which will be kept in the hallway outside of F114 at Mt. Hope High School.**

**Tater Bots   Looney Tuned Robotics**

**Connor McMullen   Mark Devol**

**Jeff MacDonough   Austin Porto**

**Benton Smith   Reid Contente**

**Nick Silva   Tao Sevigny**

**Trevor Pierce   Jacob Araujo**

**Ryan Coccio**

**Mr. Garrity's students gave a demonstration of the robot used during the competition. Mr. Silva gave some background into what the actual competition entails. Mr. Garrity added that not only do the students design, build and program the robot, but during the competition they strategize with the robot and with the teams they are competing against. Mr. Silva also recognized Mr. Garrity and his teams for winning an award which entitles them to go to the world championship for the third year in a row. Mr. Silva wished them the best of luck in St. Louis at the World Championships.**

**Congratulations to Karina Tavares who became the first girl from either Mt. Hope or Bristol High School in the 40-year history of R.I. Interscholastic girls' cross country, not only to earn All-State honors, but to place in the top-21 at the state meet. The freshman finished fifth in 19 minutes flat. Karina also placed third at the Class A Championship in 18:55 and 33rd at the New England Championships with a time of 20:04.**

**Congratulations to the following students who participated in our district-wide spelling bee and placed in the top three:**

**1st Place Caroline Alexandre**

**2nd Place Gabriel Randall**

**3rd Place Samantha Machado**

**Mrs. Thies stated that she attended the spelling bee and commented on what composure Caroline had while spelling the words and congratulated her on a superb job.**

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT / PUBLIC FORUM**

**There was no public comment.**

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

**MOTION: Mrs. McBride motioned to approve the Consent Agenda; Mrs. Campbell seconded. The motioned passed by a vote of 7 to 0.**

**MOTION: Mrs. McBride motioned to seal the minutes to the January 28, 2013 Executive Session; Mr. Saviano seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 7 to 0.**

## **FOCUS GROUPS/PERKINS PLANNING GRANT DISCUSSION**

**Mr. Silva stated that this discussion was moved from the last meeting and rescheduled to tonight to accommodate the school committee member who requested it be on the agenda.**

**Mr. Andrade began his presentation by stating that it is so appropriate to have this discussion now especially after recognizing the Robotics Teams this evening. The idea behind this concept is to restructure high schools into four different departments; one of them being STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). About a year ago, our district applied for a planning grant through the Perkins Grant. Mr. Andrade stated he was out in California at a national conference about STEM. Bristol Warren was recognized for thinking outside of the box. While at the conference, Mr. Andrade met a gentleman by the name of Sam Houston who defined STEM as “Strategies that engage minds”. Mr. Andrade said what this really represents is a culture shift and then presented a video which highlighted the urgency in implementing STEM. Some of the facts presented were that 21 out of 25 jobs are STEM jobs; women only represent 25% of the technology work force; out of 65 developed countries, the U.S. ranked 23rd in Science and 31st in math; most technology grants are awarded to people who are temporary citizens;**

Europe produced three times as many engineering graduates as the United States. Teachers are seeing an urgency in moving forward and are looking at STEM differently by asking the following questions: What do the students think? What does STEM mean to them? The students couldn't define it, but summarized their thoughts on what they would like to see a STEM Department look like. Students would like to see hands on learning by being able to see and touch within the learning process; trial and error; collaboration with peers; collaboration with instructor; combination of lab and lecture; application of knowledge. Students commented that they will go on You Tube where they can find "step by step" videos on solving problems to help them with their homework. They would like more opportunities to use Web 2.2 in classes and to BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) to class to help with completing assignments.

Mr. Andrade stated there will be another focus group in March meeting with leaders. Over the next few months, we will be visiting schools who have started STEM programs. We will also be attending two conferences related to this. Mr. Andrade stressed we aren't looking to add three new classes to the Program of Studies, but that this is a culture change and mindset with more opportunities for students to be collaborative and work hands on. Mr. Andrade said they also established one local partnership with the Herreshoff Museum where on March 7th, they will be working with them to revise one of their curriculums to help bolster it. This will then afford Bristol Warren the opportunity to have a new lab area at the Herreshoff

**Museum to do hands on experiments with their water tanks.**

**Mr. Andrade stated that they have set up a “live grant binder” where articles are placed related to research. There is also information on model high schools and STEM best practices. This binder is open to the public.**

**Mrs. Campbell thanked Mr. Andrade for being a part of this, that we have a grant for it and are moving forward. She likes when people are involved with decisions that affect themselves as is being done through this grant with both teachers and students being involved in the process. Mrs. Campbell stated that Mt. Hope High School has proven over and over again how enthused students are about math and science which is now also shifting down to the middle school. Mrs. Campbell believes that this is a way for students to make something of themselves and bring success to this region. Mrs. Campbell thanked Mrs. Thies, the STEM teachers and administrators and thanked Mr. Andrade for making a public presentation. She was encouraged that the press was present to hear this.**

**Mrs. Rancourt asked what the timeline would be? Mr. Andrade responded that the planning grant runs out June 30th and that they are hoping to have their vision by then. Mrs. Thies has made contact for expanding the arts department which will be the first step. In September, the district will begin with instructional changes including more hands on opportunities which will be school-wide. Mrs.**

**Rancourt asked if this will be AP or open to all students. Mr. Andrade responded that the STEM approach will be for all students. He stated you might have AP in other areas like a STEM Academy, but we aren't there yet as we don't want to be so rigid. Mr. Andrade said that they want to do their homework first, but should be ready in September. He said they need to start having meaningful conversations of what students needs are in this day and age so that students will be college and career ready. Mr. Andrade credited the superintendent and the school committee as we are cutting edge thereby better supporting our students.**

**(Mr. O'Dell arrived at meeting.)**

## **SUBCOMMITTEE/SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS AND INITIATIVES**

**Budget/Facilities Subcommittee: Mrs. Rancourt reported that for the facilities focus, Mr. Simmons is re-evaluating our security measures in light of current events. For our budget focus, fiscal year 2014 is ready for approval this evening. The Budget Subcommittee has had a number of meetings, one of which was last week where town council members were invited to attend. Mrs. Rancourt thanked Mrs. Thies and Mrs. Silva for such a good budget. She stated that the budget will be presented to the school committee later on in this meeting and once it is approved, it will then go on to the Joint Finance Committee in 30 days. Mrs. Rancourt stated they welcome any questions.**

**Policy/Community Affairs Subcommittee:** Mr. O'Dell stated that the committee has discussed a number of issues, but none resulting in policies. Those that came up were a cheating policy, but it was determined that this would be handled through the student handbook; coaching/coaching practices policy which was determined to be an internal policy for the time being, but will be revisited again in October; Health and Wellness Policy has been given out to the Wellness Committee to review. Mr. O'Dell stated that at next week's meeting we will be discussing Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drug Policy as well as Dating Violence Policy. Mr. O'Dell requested that if anyone had an item for the agenda to let him know.

**Personnel/Contract Negotiations Subcommittee:** Mr. Silva reported that the subcommittee is trying to proceed with the timeline for the Superintendent's Evaluation. There will be an executive session today to go through that. Mr. Silva stated he has asked Mrs. McBride to keep us on track with the timeline.

**Wellness Committee:** Mrs. Wainwright stated that tomorrow she will be meeting with the Wellness Collaborative Initiative and will be looking at our Wellness Policy to see if it aligns with RIDE. On Wednesday, the Wellness Committee will be discussing Wellness Week and setting goals the committee would like to make.

**Chairperson's Initiatives:**

There were no Chairperson's Initiatives reported on.



## **SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS AND ISSUES**

### **S2013-2 A-F: CONSENT AGENDA – PERSONNEL**

**A. A. APPOINTMENTS:** That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to appoint the following applicant to the position of Parents as Teachers (PAT) Program Manager as listed below:

**1. Emily Pearce-Spence Parents as Teachers (PAT) Program Manager**

**Effective:** Immediately, for the remainder of the 2012-13 school year

**Reason:** To fill a new position

**Funding:** Parent Fees/Self-Sufficient

**B. BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM:** That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to appoint the following applicants to the School of the 21st Century, Before and After School Program, as listed below (pending sufficient enrollment to warrant running this program and DCYF CANTS

**clearance):**

**1. Kate L. Sweeney Child Care Curriculum Specialist  
(Part Time)**

**Effective: Immediately, for the remainder of  
the 2012-13 school year, pending  
satisfactory completion of pre-  
employment requirements**

**Reason: To fill a vacancy**

**Funding: Parent Fees/Self-Sufficient**

**2. Sherry L. Emrich Child Care Site Coordinator (Part  
Time)**

**Effective: Immediately, for the  
remainder of the 2012-13 school  
year, pending satisfactory completion  
of pre-employment requirements**

**Reason: To fill a vacancy**

**Funding: Parent Fees/Self-Sufficient**

**3. Abigail C. Casey Child Care Provider (Part Time)**

**Effective: Immediately, for the remainder of the 2012-13 school year, pending satisfactory completion of pre-employment requirements**

**Reason: To fill a vacancy**

**Funding: Parent Fees/Self-Sufficient**

**C. CERTIFIED SUBSTITUTES: That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to place on file in the office of the Superintendent the following applications for certified substitutes pending satisfactory completion of pre-employment requirements:**

**CERTIFIED**

**Name Area/Level**

- 1. Denise R. Costa General Subject Matter**
  
- 2. Sara L. Cronin School Counselor**
  
- 3. Candice L. Harris-Reed General Subject Matter**

**4. Brittany T. Rapoza Early Childhood**

**5. Sawako Sugimura General Subject Matter**

**D. CLASSIFIED SUBSTITUTES:** That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to place on file in the office of the Superintendent the following applications for classified substitutes pending satisfactory completion of pre-employment requirements:

**CUSTODIAN/MAINTENANCE**

**1. Derek L. Machado**

**2. Bradley J. Oliver**

**E. LEAVES OF ABSENCE:** That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to grant leaves of absence for an Elementary Teacher and Elementary Special Educator as follows:

**1. Noelle M. Mello Grade One Teacher – Hugh Cole**

**Effective: May 20, 2013, for 6-8 weeks**

**Reason: Maternity leave in accordance with Article 21, Section L1 of the Master Agreement**

**2. Whitney Ruggeri Special Educator – Hugh Cole**

**Effective: Upon completion of Maternity Leave through March 29, 2013**

**Reason: Parental leave in accordance with Article 21, Section L2 of the Master Agreement**

**F. RESIGNATIONS/RETIREMENTS: That the School Committee confirm the recommendation of the Superintendent to accept the resignation of Rebecca Peluso from the position of Elementary Special Educator as listed below:**

**1. Rebecca Peluso Special Educator – Hugh Cole**

**Effective: End of the 2012-13 School**

**Year**

**Reason: Personal**

**Recommendation #S2013-08: That the School Committee upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, and supported by the Budget/Facilities Subcommittee, approve Budget FY14.**

**MOTION: Mr. O'Dell made a motion to approve Superintendent's Recommendation #S2013-08 for Budget FY14; Mrs. Campbell seconded.**

**DISCUSSION: Mrs. Thies passed out a hardcopy of the FY14 Budget and stated that the budget narrative was discussed at our last school committee meeting and that the Budget Subcommittee met earlier this evening and voted to approve the hard numbers of FY14. Mrs. Silva went through the pages of the FY 14 budget for those present. She stated that the "Summary of the Preliminary Budgets – All Funds" reconciles revenues and expenditures at a high summary level. It is required by UCOA that our budget request show all budget sources. The general fund for FY14 will continue as is with a reduction of \$525,012. The base is lower due to the settlement of our CBAs. We are looking to cut nine full-time employees totaling \$510,000, but are rebuilding by adding eight full-time employees for an addition totaling \$690,000. These changes reflect the enrollment**

shift that has occurred where our elementary numbers have increased. Another \$150,000 will be added for tech devices for a total of \$50,472,586. FY13 salary totals \$26 million with an increase of 0.75% which includes all the additions and step increases and is due to the very favorable settlement of our CBAs. FY13 benefits totaled \$13,209,688 and for FY14 benefits totaled \$13,265, 536 for an increase of 0.44% due to redesign to high deductible health plan. FY13 purchase services totaled \$8,202,194 and in FY14 \$7,713,378 for a reduction of 7.44%. The biggest reduction is in tuitions due to fewer students placed outside of district. FY13 – supplies and materials totaled \$1,981,879 and in FY14 totaled \$1,887,914 for a reduction of 6.14%. Mrs. Silva noted that this is not due to a reduction in student materials. In fact, student materials were added. This number represents office supplies. Energy and transportation numbers also come under the heading of supplies and materials. Those numbers in FY13 were \$1,124,336 and in FY14, \$1,037,080 with a reduction of 7.76%. This reduction is due to changing to a new energy supplier. FY13 equipment totaled \$497,860 and in FY14, totaled \$541,495 for an increase of 8.76% due to addition of tech devices. Asset protection had no change from FY13 to FY14. FY13 Other (dues, fees, memberships) totaled \$82,971 and in FY14, totaled \$78,531 for a reduction of 5.35%. FY13 debt service totaled \$3,068,616 and in FY14, totaled \$3,053,613 for a decrease of 0.49%. Our total budget reduction is 0.56% which is the first time in our history that we have ever come in with a budget request lower than the previous year without cutting into it, but instead rebuilding.

Mrs. Lynch asked about the reduction in tuition on page three whether those students have aged out. Mrs. Thies responded, yes. Mrs. Rimoshytus asked why the district was eliminating six TA's when they just hired six and whether that did not work out. Mrs. Thies responded that they are still preparing data on it. The district is moving forward to increase our elementary teachers due to the enrollment shift. The best possible model is to have a certified teacher, and to ensure good teacher to student ratios. Mrs. Thies continued that the six TA's were hired this year because we had an influx of students that registered late which brought numbers in two classrooms up to 28 at Guiteras. Rather than disrupt the classes that had already begun, we moved forward with hiring the additional TAs for those classrooms. It seemed to work well. At Hugh Cole there were several classes that were also over cap in the 4th grade classroom which is the most foundational grade. Mrs. Thies said that the best educational practices are to have good teacher to student ratios.

Mrs. Silva continued with going through the budget numbers for FY14 discussing revenue reconciliation comparing FY13 to FY14. This budget will require an additional 1% equaling \$333,870 to help offset a reduction in state aid of 4.17%. This is year three of the funding formula. Mrs. Silva said we can expect an increase in Medicaid of 6.15%. Interest income has dropped by 60.00% due to interest rates going down to nothing. The re-appropriated fund balance for FY13



was \$700,000 and in FY14, \$800,000 for our OPEB liability. Total FY14 budget request is \$300,015 less than what we requested in FY13. Mrs. Silva then discussed town appropriation which is based on October 2012 enrollments. The town of Bristol was 65.36% and Warren was 34.64% representing a 1.80% shift between Bristol and Warren. We also included the breakdown of elementary and secondary which shows our elementary steadily increasing.

Mr. O'Dell commented that with the overall budget request of \$300,015 being less because of reduction in state aid, do we still need this with the carryover of \$400,000. Mrs. Silva responded, yes.

Mrs. McBride thanked all the staff in the district for their professionalism and willingness to take zero salary increases for the next three years and for switching to a healthcare with a high deductible which made a significant benefit to our budget. By taking this step, we were able to move forward.

Mrs. Thies added that between the presentation and the review of the hard numbers, this isn't something that happens for a single year. The district has been working toward this beginning in FY11. It is a protection plan for this district and for the two towns which has come at a sacrifice for all members of the community. Mrs. Thies stated that she is very proud of this budget as the sacrifices made never impacted programming for students and that no program was cut. Instead, we thought of efficient ways to deliver our current

**instruction. No academic outcomes were affected. Mrs. Thies said that they are looking to partner with the District Management Council as we still have a looming reduction in state funding with a reduction in the funding formula. By partnering with them, we will work out how to deliver a quality product that won't impact student outcomes.**

**Mrs. Lynch commented that we have worked together with both unions that will put in place savings over time which will benefit us since there are six more years of the funding formula.**

**Mrs. Rimoshytus asked what will happen when sequestration starts March 1st. Mrs. Silva replied that on page 1, fourth column of the handout it shows \$1.9 million that has been lowered by sequestration and as reflected has been factored in. Mrs. Silva said our administrators planned ahead with this coming up.**

**Mr. Silva thanked the superintendent and administrators along with the entire staff of the school district as this budget will be more appreciated by the tax payers we all serve.**

**The motion to approve FY14 budget passed with an 8 to 0 vote.**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION – 8:31 p.m.**

**Mr. Silva stated for the record that an executive session is being called pursuant to Open Meeting Laws 42-46-5(a)(1) for the following: Superintendent's Evaluation. No action will be taken during this**

**meeting, and we will only be returning to adjourn.**

**MOTION: At 8:31 p.m., Mrs. Lynch motioned to go into executive session; seconded by Mr. O'Dell. The motion passed with a vote of 8-0.**

**MOTION: At 8:52 p.m., Mrs. Campbell motioned to end the executive session; seconded by Mr. O'Dell. The motion passed with a vote of 8-0..**

**ADJOURNMENT – 8:53 PM**

**MOTION: There being no further business to discuss, Mrs. Campbell motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 PM; seconded by Mrs. McBride. The motion passed by a 8 -0 vote.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Karen A. Lynch, Secretary**

**/kd**